

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 IO-13 AID-20 OMB-01 DPW-01 RSR-01 /142 W

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R 200238Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0678

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BG, N, PK

SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENTS ON INDO-PAK TALKS

1. SUMMARY: IN SEPARATE PRESS CONFERENCES AUGUST 16, P.N. HAKSAR AND KAMAL HOSSAIN STATED BDG AND GOI IN AGREEMENT ON THEIR POSITION FOR NEXT ROUND OF TALKS WITH PAKISTAN, EMPHASIZING THAT DELHI TALKS WOULD BE SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF JOINT DECLARATION. BDG OFFICIAL STATEMENTS REPEATEDLY INSISTED ON THE "EXTRANEIOUS NATURE" OF WAR CRIMES TRIALS BUT INDICATED SOME FLEXIBILITY ON BIHARI ISSUE BY SAYING DETAILED MODALITIES OF HUMANITARIAN ISSUES COULD BE WORKED OUT LATER. GOVERNMENT- DOMINATED PAPER MORNING NEWS IN UNSIGNED ARTICLE SPECULATED THAT EXTRANEIOUS ISSUES LIKE TRAILS AND PRE-WAR DEBTS

COULD BE NEGOTIATED DIRECTLY AND SEPARATELY BY MUJIB AND BHUTTO, FOLLOWING PAK RECOGNITION OF BDG. SENATOR WILLIAM SAXBE DURING TELEVISION INTERVIEW IN DACCA WEIGHED IN WITH SOME STERN ADVICE OF HIS OWN. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING A MEETING OF MORE THAN AN HOUR WITH MUJIB, HAKSAR

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REPORTEDLY TOLD NEWSMEN THAT "HE NATURALLY WAS SATISFIED"

WITH HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER AND THAT THE TALKS IN DELHI WOULD BE ON THE BASIS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION AND "NOTHING ELSE." HE DECLINED TO ELABORATE FURTHER. HAKSAR SAID THAT HE RETAINED IN DACCA THE "MOOD OF CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM" HE HAD FELT IN PAKISTAN FOLLOWING THE FIRST ROUND OF TALKS. HIS STATEMENT OF OPTIMISM WAS REPEATED FREQUENTLY IN PRESS ACCOUNTS.

3. DESCRIBING HIS SIX HOURS OF TALKS WITH HAKSAR AS "VERY USEFUL", KAMAL HOSSAIN TOLD PRESS THAT DETAILS HAD BEEN WORKED OUT ON THE DELHI TALKS AND AN INDO-BANGLADESH BRIEF HAD BEEN FINALIZED. HE REPEATED THAT ANY SETTLEMENT WITH PAKISTAN HAD TO BE ON THE BASIS OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, BUT THAT ONCE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DECLARATION WERE ACCEPTED, "THE DETAIL MODALITIES" OF IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT. EARLIER IN THE DAY FOREIGN SECRETARY ENAYET KARIM HAD TOLD NEWSMEN THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WERE BASED ON THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE PROBLEMS RAISED BY PAKISTAN IN THE FIRST ROUND IN ISLAMABAD. KARIM AGAIN SAID THAT THE WAR CRIMES TRIALS WERE AN ISSUE "EXTRANEIOUS" TO THE DECLARATION AND THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH HAKSAR INCLUDED NO EXTRANEIOUS MATTERS.

4. IN THE GOVERNMENT-DOMINATED MORNING NEWS AUGUST 17 AN UNSIGNED ARTICLE PRESENTED SPECULATION OF "DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS" ON PAKISTANI OPTIONS IN TALKS. GIST OF SPECULATION FOLLOWS: PAKISTAN COULD SEEK RESOLUTION OF EXTRANEIOUS ISSUES OF WAR CRIMES TRIALS AND REPAYMENT OF FOREIGN LOANS ONLY BY OPENING DIALOGUE WITH BANGLADESH ON BASIS OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY. INDO-PAK TALKS COULD PAVE WAY FOR MUJIB-BHUTTO SUMMIT. INDIA WOULD NOT WANT TO DECIDE WAR CRIMES ISSUE ON BANGLADESH'S BEHALF FOR FEAR OF ENCROACHING ON BANGLADESH'S SOVEREIGNTY. PAKISTAN HAS TWO ALTERNATIVES: EITHER ACCEPT JOINT DECLARATION, LEAVING ASIDE WAR CRIMES TRIAL ISSUE, OR RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH TO OPEN DIALOGUE WITH MUJIB TO SETTLE ALL OUT-STANDING ISSUES. BANGLADESH IS NOT AVERSE TO OPENING DIALOGUE WITH PAKISTAN ON BASIS OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY. KEY TO SOLUTION IS IN THE HANDS OF PAKISTAN.

5. ALTHOUGH RETICENT IN PUBLIC COMMENTS, BOTH HAKSAR AND KAMAL HOSSAIN CONVEYED TONE OF REASONABLENESS AND SOME OPTIMISM. GOING BEYOND HIS USUAL RIGID LINE THAT ONLY HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS AS EXPRESSED IN JOINT DECLARATION WERE AT ISSUE, KAMAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOSSAIN APPEARED TO SIGNAL SOME FLEXIBILITY ON POPULATION EXCHANGE IN STATING THAT ONCE PAKISTAN ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DECLARATION, THE "DETAILED MODALITIES" COULD BE WORKED OUT. THE MORNING NEWS STORY IS SIGNIFICANT AS IT APPEARS IN A GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER ALONG WITH THE HAKSAR AND KAMAL INTERVIEWS. IF THE BDG DID PLANT THE STORY, AND THIS SEEMS LIKELY, REFERENCE TO RESOLVING THE WAR CRIMES TRIALS THROUGH BILATERAL TALKS LATER IS ENCOURAGING. HOWEVER, THE EITHER-OR ALTERNATIVES

PROPOSED FOR PAKISTAN ARE A RETURN TO THE POLITICAL- HUMANITARIAN LINKAGE OF THE EARLIER BDG POSITION IN EFFECT, THE STORY SAYS TO BHUTTO: ACCEPT THE JOINT DECLARATION AS PROPOSED WITH NO REFERENCE TO WAR CRIMES TRAILS OR YOUR WILL GET NO SETTLEMENT OF ANY KIND UNTIL YOU RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH AND DEAL DIRECTLY WITH MUJIB. THE ARTICLE IS CONTRADICTORY, PERHAPS DELIBERATELY SO, BUT IN THIS WAY PROBABLY REFLECTS MUJIB'S OWN POSITION.

6. FROM SEVERAL ACCOUNTS OF THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE HAKSAR-BDG TALKS, WE UNDERSTAND THHE GOING WAS ROUGH AND THAT HAKSAR ENGAGED THE BENGALLEES WITH DIFFICULTY. VAGUE AND NUANCED REFERENCES TO SETTING ASIDE "EXTRANEIOUS ISSUES" AND "DETAILED MODALITIES" WERE THDE FARTHEST THE BDG WAS PREPARED TO GO PUBLICALLY. HOPEFULLY, HAKSAR WILL BE ABLE TO CONVINCE PAKISTAN TO ACCEPT THESE SIGNS OF FLEXIBILITY AS SUFFICIENT GROUNDS ON WHICH THE TALKS CAN PROCEED.

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7. SENATOR SAXBE WEIGHED INTO THE FRACAS WITH A FEW STERN WORDS OF HIS OWN. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BANGLADESH TELEVISION TAPED FOR LATER BROADCAST, SAXBE AUGUST 16, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON SUBCONTINENTAL PROBLEMS, REMARKED THAT THE WORLD WOULD NOT BE SYMPATHETIC IF IT THOUGHT THAT BANGLADESH AND

PAKISTAN WERE ACTING ON THE BASIS OF SAVING FACE WHILE THOUSANDS WERE HELD PRISONER. NOR WOULD WORLD OPINION BE SYMPATHETIC TO EITHER SIDE IF THE IMPRESSION REMAINS THAT IMPRISONED OR DETAINED PEOPLES WERE BEING USED AS BARGAINING CHIPS. STATING THAT IT WAS NOT HIS POSITION TO COMMENT ON WHETHER OR NOT BANGLADESH SHOULD HOLD WAR CRIMES TRIALS, THE SENATOR SUGGESTED THAT WHATEVER ITS DECISION, BDG SHOULD HOLD THE TRIALS SOON OR DROP THEM. NOTING THAT BANGLADESH WAS DEALING WITH PAKISTAN THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF INDIA, SAXBE REMARKED THAT BANGLADESH SHOULD LISTEN TO THE ADVICE OF ITS GOOD FRIEND, INDIA. SAXBE'S REMARKS WERE NOT WHAT HIS BENGALEE HOSTS EXPECTED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973DACCA03722
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730828/aaaaaume.tel
Line Count: 181
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <08-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS ON INDO-PAK TALKS
TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN, PK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005